



CITY OF FALLS CHURCH

DATE: January 15, 2020

TO: Mayor Tarter and Members of City Council

FROM: Citizens Advisory Committee on Transportation (CACT)

SUBJECT: CACT 2019 Annual Report

Introduction

This report summarizes the calendar year 2019 activities of the Citizens Advisory Committee on Transportation (CACT) and its priorities for 2020. Members of the CACT include Andrea Caumont (Chair), Dave Gustafson (Vice-Chair), Paul Baldino, Addison Heard, Bill Ackerman, Doug Devereaux, and Shaun Dakin. The CACT is supported by Transportation Planner Jeff Sikes as well as the Department of Public Works' Tara Puzin, P.E., and Zak Bradley, P.E. We would like to thank them for their invaluable support. We would also like to thank our City Council liaison Dave Snyder and our Planning Commission liaison Melissa Teates for their guidance and support.

We appreciate the opportunity to serve the growing City of Falls Church by working with citizens and City staff to improve the safety and effectiveness of transportation in and around the City.

Neighborhood Traffic Calming Program

The CACT continued to assist staff in implementing the Neighborhood Traffic Calming (NTC) program. Public interest in the program grew dramatically in 2019. Based on this increased interest, the CACT submitted a letter to Council recommending a significant portion of surplus local funds be designated to complete top-priority projects in the NTC program. Committee members also provided feedback to staff supporting the idea of amending the program to employ a more administrative approach, which could allow for larger projects to be completed. The CACT hopes to refine the NTC program in 2020.

Dockless e-scooters

The CACT believes e-scooters will help expand mode choice in Falls Church. The committee provided feedback on the City's pilot program and submitted a letter to Council recommending the devices be permitted on City sidewalks at reduced speeds. Ensuring scooter riders feel safe is key to the success of the program. The CACT is looking forward to a successful launch of the e-scooter pilot program in 2020.

E-Bikes on W&OD Trail

The CACT wrote a letter of support for NOVA Parks' proposal to allow e-bikes to operate on the W&OD trail. E-bikes provide a viable alternative to automobile use, reduce congestion and improve air quality. Importantly, e-bikes make transportation and recreational cycling available to people with physical limitations and those who may be deterred by the exertion of conventional cycling.

20 mph speed limit

The CACT discussed the merits of instituting a lower speed limit in the City of Falls Church. Staff provided data from Seattle and Portland and comments from the FCC Police Department. Based on this information, the committee decided 20 mph would likely have little benefit and incur costs for administrative time, engineering studies, and new signage. The CACT sent a memo to Council recommending no action on 20mph at this time.

Permit Parking

Committee member Paul Baldino researched the permit parking policies of neighboring jurisdictions and wrote a memo summarizing his findings. This memo was shared with the City Manager and members of City Council.

Improving walkability

Council invited CACT to recommend the use of \$100,000 in FY20 budget for short-term spot improvements to address pedestrian safety and walkability. The CACT provided recommendations on various projects throughout the City. Additional recommendations are provided as an addendum to this memo.

Neighborhood Pace Car Program

The CACT refined materials for the Neighborhood Pace Car Program. Under this program, which we plan to roll out in spring 2020, volunteers will sign a pledge to drive within the speed limit, stop for pedestrians, and drive courteously, thereby "setting the pace" for local traffic. Participants will display a Pace Car decal on their vehicles.

Development plan review

The CACT continued to stay engaged with plans for two major development projects: Founders Row and West Falls Church. The committee attended the June 2019 Community Meeting on the West Falls Church Economic Development Project and received a special presentation by the developer on transportation issues. The CACT provided questions and comments on pedestrian facilities, amenities for cyclists, site circulation and traffic calming. A consistent concern of the CACT is adequate sidewalk width and clear areas for pedestrians to pass safely.

Bike to Work Day, Parking Day, Walk and Bike to School Day

Committee members happily participated in various celebrations of biking, walking and reclaiming public space during 2019 which were organized by City staff. The CACT looks forward to supporting the City's continued participation in fun events that promote alternate forms of mobility and hopes to add a new event in coming years. One of the committee's goals for the year is to explore whether an Open Streets event could work for Falls Church.

Regional transportation projects

The committee received presentations on plans for the Route 7 bus rapid transit (BRT) project and reviewed WMATA's bus transformation project report.

2020 Goals

- Administer, evaluate and refine the Neighborhood Traffic Calming program
- Research Tactical Urbanism ped/bike projects in other jurisdictions for potential application to the City.
- Explore immediate options to improve walking and biking access to MEH and GMHS campus
- Meet with the Rec & Parks advisory board to discuss hosting an Open Streets event in Falls Church
- Meet with the Environmental Sustainability Council to discuss ways to promote walking and biking
- Meet with Police Department to discuss availability of crash data
- Work with City staff to develop a neighborhood sidewalk program